

For Immediate Release
News Release

***Come Play with Me!* Piano Project Launches at
St. John's International Airport**

St. John's, NL, Tuesday, December 9, 2014 - *Come Play With Me!*, Atlantic Canada's first street piano project, launched today at the St. John's International Airport.

"Street pianos are popping up all over the world, and you never know what kind of moments will be created as a result. In bringing this project to our province, we hope this will be one way in which we can shine a spotlight on the arts, and bring businesses in to support them," said John Fisher, Acting CEO, Business and Arts NL.

The piano, donated by Steele Hotels, and decorated by local artist Justin Fong, will be on display in the atrium of the Airport Terminal Building, and will be available to passers-by wishing to "tinkle the ivories" on their way through the airport.

"We are proud to partner with Business and Arts NL on the launch of this community project. We're hoping to entice those travelling through our Airport to play the piano and engage in the inspiring music and creativity that surrounds us. This is a great opportunity to showcase the talent in our province and to welcome spontaneous performers from abroad," said Keith Collins, President and CEO, St. John's International Airport Authority.

The launch featured performances by pianist Timothy Brennan, a distinguished alumni of the Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival and Abby Schwartz, a student of Noreen Greene - Fraize Music Studio.

As part of the *Come Play With Me!* piano project, pianos will be left in public spaces in order to stimulate conversation, create moments of beauty and connection, while promoting the value of art and music. Pianos will be popping up in other spaces across the province over the next few months.

Over 1,300 street pianos are on display in more than 45 cities across the world, and Business and Arts NL has undertaken to bring this phenomenon to Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal is to help create moments of connection, community and beauty within our urban lives, promoting the value of art, and enticing the musicians inside all of us to "come out and play".

If you would like to be involved, or have a piano you would like to donate, please contact Business and Arts NL.

Business and Arts NL is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating mutually beneficial relationships between the arts and business communities. Our members include businesses and corporations interested in supporting, working with, and benefitting the creative sector, and innovative artists and

arts organizations interested in creating meaningful connections with creative contributions to the private sector.

St. John's International Airport Authority is a private, not-for-profit organization with the mandate to provide the region with a safe, cost-efficient transportation facility that is a catalyst for economic growth. Under the provisions of a long-term Ground Lease with the Federal Government of Canada, the Airport Authority is responsible for the airport's operations on behalf of the community it serves.

Steele Hotels, owner of five of Newfoundland's most popular hotels, in St. John's, Gander, and Corner Brook, is a Founding Member of Business and Arts Newfoundland and Labrador, and is thrilled to be partnering on the launch of this first street piano. Steele Hotels opened a new boutique hotel, JAG, in downtown St. John's on December 2. This hotel, located at 115 George St. West boasts 88 rooms, a fitness facility, and a full service dining room and lounge.

Media contacts:

Sara Norris
Marketing and Communications Advisor
St. John's International Airport Authority
709-758-8756, 709-725-3460
snorris@stjohnsairport.com
www.stjohnsairport.com

Amy Henderson
General Manager
Business and Arts Newfoundland and Labrador
709-745-1611
contact@businessandartsnl.com
businessandartsnl.com

For access to video footage documenting the transformation of this piano, please contact Amy Henderson or click the following link <http://bit.ly/1Bwl6dy>.

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Backgrounder

Timothy Brennan is a fourth-year piano performance major and composition minor at Memorial University who studies with Timothy Steeves. He holds an Associate Performance Diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music. In 2013, Timothy was the winner of the Kiwanis Music Festival's Senior Instrumental Rose Bowl and he received the Dorothy Buckley Prize at the CFMTA National Piano Competition. This past summer, he participated in the International Piano Festival at the University of Florida and Art of the Piano program at the University of Cincinnati. This year marked Timothy's fourth time participating as a Young Artist in the Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival in St. John's.

Justin Fong is a local artist who grew up in St. John's. He's a visual artist who combines mediums such as pen, ink, marker, spray paint and acrylics. Some of his recent work features non-traditional city and landscapes of Newfoundland, drawing on his background in urban and street art for a fresh and vibrant look. Justin was helped on this project by Rob Barkhouse.

Abi Schwartz, a St. John's native who is 13 years old, studies voice and piano at Noreen Greene - Fraize Music Studio in St. John's since the age of 5. She attends MacDonald Drive Junior High, and sings in the Atlantic Vocal Ensemble Treble Choir, and is an active dancer.